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ABSTRACT

The changing ethnic population of college students presents a need to assess college satisfaction, particularly in view of the increasing numbers of black students attending predominantly white colleges and universities. The relationship between assertiveness and college satisfaction was studied in a multicultural population of 23 black and 23 white college students who completed the College Self Satisfaction Questionnaire and the College Self Expression Scale. Statistical analyses did not support the hypothesis of a significant relationship between assertiveness and satisfaction. In addition, no statistically significant ethnic differences were found for assertiveness. Black students did, however, achieve higher scores than white students on the assertion measure. Black students were significantly less satisfied with their college experience, confirming previous research. The findings suggest that assertiveness and college satisfaction may be inversely related. (Author/JAC)

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THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ASSERTIVENESS AND COLLEGE SATISFACTION IN A MULTICULTURAL POPULATION

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Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Southeastern Psychological Association, New Orleans, LA, March 24-27, 1982.

The Relationship between Assertiveness and College Satisfaction in a Multicultural Population[1]

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It was only after the college student unrest of the 1960's that research attention was directed towards assessing levels of satisfaction with college life. The changing ethnic population in the 1970's and 80's again presents a need to assess college satisfaction, particularly in view of the significant increase in the number of black college students attending predominantly white colleges and universities. College satisfaction would be an appropriate index of the adjustment of the student, especially black students. In one of the few published studies dealing specifically with college satisfaction of black students in the 1980's, Robertson (1980) found few differences between black and white undergraduate students in the degree of satisfaction with college life. Using the College Self-Satisfaction Questionaire (CSSQ), he found that the only aspect of college life which black students were displeased with was the

the university's system of rewards (grades). Thus, the black college student population expressed a discrepancy between the amount of work required and the academic outcome received.

No research to date has examined the reasons for these feelings of inequity in input/output characteristics of a university's academic reward system. Nor have there been any research which has examined the relationship between student personality characteristics and the degree of college satisfaction. The degree to which students will assert themselves to meet the academic challenges presented could affect the subsequent evaluation of the academic reward system utilized. Moreover, student assertiveness could affect the degree of adjustment to and satisfaction with the college experience. The present investigation explored the relationship between college satisfaction and assertiveness in a population of black and white college students. Experimental results should clarify the degree to which the two ethnic groups differ in the two variables as well as the relationship between the variables for both ethnic groups.

METHOD

Subjects

Forty-six undergraduate students (23 black and 23 white) enrolled in introductory psychology classes at the University of Southern Mississippi and the University of South Alabama volunteered to participate in the study. An equal number of

males (N=11) and females (N=12) composed each of the two groups.

Procedure

The students were administered the College Self-Expression Scale (CSES) as a measure of assertion (Galassi, Delo, Galassi & Bastien, 1974) and the College Student Satisfaction Questionnaire (CSSQ) as the measure of college satisfaction (Starr, Betz & Menne, 1971) during their regular class periods. Both of these instruments were standardized and validated for use with college student populations.

RESULTS

Analysis of the data for the total sample on the CSES and CSSQ revealed a nonsignificant Pearson-Product Moment correlation coefficient ($r = -.12$, $p > .05$). Additional analysis also revealed nonsignificant correlations for the ethnic groups separately (rs ranged from -.06 to -.08).

Insert Table 1 about here

Student's t-test assessing ethnic differences in assertion was found to be nonsignificant ($t = 1.08$, $p > .05$), however, a significant difference between ethnic groups ($t = 2.01$, $p < .05$) in overall college satisfaction was found. Additional analysis also revealed significant differences between black and white students on three of the six scales of the CSSQ (compensation,

social and recognition, p's $<.05$)

Insert Table 2 about here

DISCUSSION

The statistical analysis did not support the hypothesis of a significant relationship between assertiveness and total college satisfaction scores. The negative direction of the correlation was unexpected. The compensation subscale, which measures the university's system of rewards, did however, approach significance ($p = .06$). Moreover, the analysis revealed a trend towards an inverse relationship between assertiveness and college satisfaction for both ethnic groups, as well as, for the majority of the subscales of the CSSQ. In fact, the only positive relationships found were between the Social subscale of the CSSQ and the CSES.

The analysis also did not support the hypothesis of statistically significant ethnic differences in assertion. Blacks students, did however, achieve higher scores than the white students on the assertion measure (CSES). Finally, statistical analysis confirmed the findings of previous research when comparing black and white college students on levels of college satisfaction. Black college students were significantly less satisfied with their college experience, than their white coun-

terparts. Perhaps the high levels of assertiveness manifested by the black students, at these universities, inversely contributes, in some complex fashion, to their subsequent satisfaction with their college experiences. This relationship also seems to hold true for the white students; but to a lesser degree.

Although the present study is too limited to permit generalizations, it does suggests, that additional study of the relationship between ethnic and personality characteristics of students and college satisfaction could be quite valuable. When the relationship between assertiveness and college satisfaction has been assessed in a sufficiently large number of colleges and universities, the knowledge of the exact relationship between these two variables may advance to a level where generalizations and predictions can be made. In the meantime, it seems fair to assume that assertiveness and college satisfaction may be inversely related.

Table 1

Correlation Coefficients for CSES and CSSQ Scores

CSSQ Subscales	CSES Blacks (n=23)	CSES Whites (n=23)	Total (n=43)
COMPENSATION	-.19	-.17	-.22
SOCIAL	-.04	.27	.03
RECOGNITION	-.01	-.07	-.08
WORK CONDITIONS	-.04	-.10	-.13
QUALITY OF EDUCATION	-.13	-.19	-.17
TOTAL SATISFACTION	-.06	-.08	-.12

Table 2

Means, Standard Deviations, and *t* Ratios for CSES and CSSQ Scores

	CSES Mean	CSES S.D.	*t*	CSSQ Mean	CSSQ S.D.	*t*
Blacks	126.82	17.9	1.08	204.10	46.76	-2.01*
Whites	121.08	18.0		228.50	34.54	

* $p < .05$

REFERENCE NOTE

[1]This paper was read at the annual meeting of the Southeastern Psychological Association in New Orleans, Louisiana, March,1982.

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